



Idaho's Silver Valley Project State and Private Forestry



The Silver Valley Ecological Restoration and Development Project supports a multi-organization and landowner effort to improve forest health, reduce wildfire threats and support biomass utilization. The project also includes treatments, education and outreach geared to forest health improvements, sustainable management, and economic development.

Building Partnerships in Shoshone County, Idaho

Declaration of Commitment

Signed on September 1, 2010 by thirty-four stakeholders to support the mission of the Shoshone Forest Health Collaborative (SFHC)



The Silver Valley, located along a 40-mi. section of I-90, suffered the impacts of the 1910 fire. Several towns and millions of acres of forests were burned. Sites have regenerated and forests are now dense with trees. The newly formed Collaborative promotes forest health improvement projects, protection of the Wildland Urban Interface, the utilization of forest resources and related opportunities to strengthen local communities.

Two working groups have been established to meet the SFHC goals. The Forest Health Group identifies and develops projects that will promote forest health and reduce fire threats. The Biomass Group focuses on economic development and utilization of biomass.



In the field, the Forest Health Group discusses a potential project that will protect the city of Mullan's water supply and allow for seral species and aspen restoration.

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The SFHC Mission

Ensure public health, safety & welfare, and protection of county residents & property from wildfire through science based consideration of ecosystem components and to promote a sustainable ecosystem, economic viability and quality of life through collaboration.



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Targeted workshops and events are providing the county, forest landowners, local organizations and educators with information to help plan and implement projects that will promote forest health and biomass utilization in Idaho's Silver Valley. The Idaho Department of Lands works with multiple partners to provide these opportunities.

Forest Restoration and Biomass Roundtable

In 2009, the Shoshone County Commissioners brought in forest health experts, biologists and engineers to discuss the ecologic conditions in area forests and the potential to build an energy producing biomass facility. Sixty-five people attended the event and the outcome was the formation of the Shoshone Forest Health Collaborative.



Thinning and Pruning Workshops

During 2010, 19 landowners received valuable hands-on experience during two thinning and pruning workshops. "I have a forest but didn't know anything about thinning or pruning. I learned a lot!" commented one landowner. The University of Idaho Forestry Extension conducted the workshops.

Small-Scale Energy from Forest Biomass Workshop

In 2011, the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory and State and Private Forestry, the University of Idaho, and the USDA Rural Development Agency shared with participants small-scale technologies to generate energy from local sources of forest biomass. Local businesses, elected officials, entrepreneurs and others with a stake in community development and forest health attended the event.

Shoshone Forest Landowner Field Day

The Idaho Forest Owners Association is leading efforts to host a forest owner field day July 9, 2011. This event will feature a variety of demonstrations that will help landowners plan and implement sound forest management practice.

Treatments Decades of emissions from the Bunker Hill Lead Smelter created an environment that left over 5000 acres barren of vegetation. In the late 70's, reforestation efforts began and over a 15-year period, 2.8 million trees were planted. With this project, 48 acres have been thinned and pruned to enhance forest health and soil resources and reduce the threat of fire to communities.



In photos to the left and center, Ed Pommerening, led the reforestation effort to plant trees on the barren hillsides. Of interest, mine tunnels were converted and served as the nursery to grow seedlings. On the right, Ed proudly looks over the recent thinning and pruning that will keep this young forest healthy.

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